

Movie Review

Ratings based on a five-star system.
Five — Excellent; One — Pathetic.

"Deadly Friend"
Directed by Wes Craven;
Starring Matthew Labor-
teaux, Kristy Swanson and
Michael Sharrett

★

Wes Craven is probably the best director since Edward Wood, Jr. It's possible, but doubtful, that Craven's "Deadly Friend" might be remembered as fondly as Wood's epic "Plan 9 From Outer Space." The problem is that "Deadly Friend" is not consistently bad enough to stand up to "Plan 9."

"Deadly Friend" is the story of Paul (Matthew Labor-teaux), a 15-year-old boy genius who moves into a nice little suburb with his mother and his robot,

Bee Bee, so that he can attend a local college and teach classes on robotics.

During their first day in the new neighborhood, Paul and Bee Bee meet Tom (Michael Sharrett), the paper boy, and Samantha (Kristy Swanson), the girl next door whose alcoholic father (Richard Marcus) likes to bat her around. Paul and Kristy fall in love while the four of them, three kids and a robot, play basketball and bother the weird old lady (Anne Ramsey) who lives across the street.

On Halloween night, the kids try to play a prank on the weirdo old lady but she pulls a shotgun on them and blows the robot's transistors away. Then

on Thanksgiving night, Samantha's old man, looking like Bruce Dern on a bad day, knocks Samantha down the stairs. On the way down, Samantha's brain is turned into guacamole.

Paul, in a fit of prepubescent necrophilia, decides to save Samantha by plugging Bee Bee's spare parts into her brain. Paul takes his newly computerized girlfriend back home. Unfortunately, the director never explores the possibilities of the relationship of Paul and the remote-controlled Samantha.

Samantha, who now has Bee Bee's incredible strength, then goes out to settle a couple of matters with her father and the weird old lady. A little furnace-fu shows daddy that he

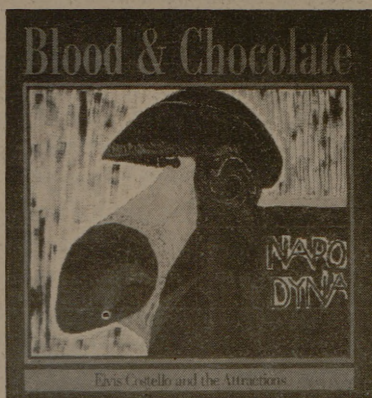
shouldn't dribble his little daughter down the stairs. A little basketball-fu shows the weirdo old lady the dangers of keeping the kids' ball when it bounces into her yard.

The violence in "Deadly Friend" is so badly done it's hard to keep from laughing at the blood and gore. When the weird old lady gets her head blown off with a basketball, the entire audience rolled with laughter. The acting, especially Swanson's pretending to be a robot, is the only thing worse than the special effects.

"Deadly Friend" is bad, but it's not bad enough. It provides a few laughs but is ultimately disappointing.

—Review by Karl Pallmeyer

Album Reviews



"Blood & Chocolate"
Elvis Costello and the
Attractions
Columbia Records
★★★★

For the second time this year, Elvis is back.

I'm not talking about the dead fat guy. I'm talking about the real Elvis — Elvis Costello.

From his first album, "My Aim Is True" (1977) to his eighth, "Imperial Bedroom" (1982), Costello received great critical acclaim. His next two albums, "Punch the Clock" (1983) and "Goodbye Cruel World" (1984), were collections of lame pop songs that showed an overall lack of inspiration.

Earlier this year, Costello released "King of America," a tour de force album that included several biting attacks on the image that he had created for himself. "King of America"

featured mostly session musicians instead of the Attractions, the band Costello had been working with for almost a decade.

Now Costello and the Attractions have released "Blood & Chocolate," which recalls some of the best styles and flavors of Costello's early work. Costello's lyrics, filled with brutal sarcasm, are up to his usually brilliant standards.

The songs "Uncomplicated," "I Hope You're Happy Now," "Honey, Are You Straight Or Are You Blind?" and "Next Time 'Round" would sound at home on Costello's 1978 "Armed Forces" album. But some of these faster songs lack fire.

"Home Is Anywhere You Hang Your Head" and "Blue Chair" are great ballads done in a country style. "I Want You" is a nice slow blues tune.

Cait O'Riordan, Costello's new wife, contributes vocal backing to the songs "Tokyo Storm Warning," "Crimes of Paris" and "Poor Napoleon," which she co-wrote with Costello. Costello and O'Riordan show great promise as a song-writing team.

"Battered Old Bird," a stunning portrait of life in the slums, is harrowing. It's one of the best songs of Costello's career.

"Blood & Chocolate" is a good album but, compared to "King of America," it seems to be a step backward for Costello. Fortunately, that step is only a small one.

—Review by Karl Pallmeyer



"True Stories"
The Talking Heads
Sire Records
★★★★½

In 1978, David Byrne wrote a song called "The Big Country." "The Big Country," which appeared on the Talking Heads' "More Songs About Buildings and Food" album, was about life in a small town and how Byrne felt he couldn't live that sort of life. "True Stories" views small town life a bit more favorably.

The "True Stories" album is a collection of the Talking

Heads' versions of the songs that Byrne wrote for the film of the same name. "True Stories," the first film to be written and directed by Byrne, takes place in the mythical Virgil, Texas.

Aside from the weak "Love for Sale," the album is fantastic. "Puzzlin' Evidence" is a soulful number that really jams. "Wild Life" is a catchy dance tune filled with fun. "Hey Now," with its slight Latin flavor, would also make a good dance track.

Texas accordionist Estaban "Steve" Jordan appears on "Radio Head." "Radio Head" is a combination reggae and zydeco tune about the way television and radio presents the rest of the world to small town people.

Since "True Stories" takes place in a small Texas town, many of the songs have a country twang. "Dream Operator," a slow country waltz, is a touching song about growing up and wishing.

"People Like Us" uses fiddle and slide guitar to tell a story about country people. "City of Dreams," a nice slow song, sums up the theme of the album and the movie.

"True Stories" is another great album from a great band. The Talking Heads can only get better.

—Review by Karl Pallmeyer